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INFO WHA CENTRAL AMERICA COLLECTIVE

FOR WHA/CEN - ROIS BEAL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PBTS OAS GT BH

SUBJECT: BELIZE OAS SANTA ROSA PROJECT UPDATE

REF: (A) 07 BELMOPAN 665; (B) BEAL-HILL E-MAIL 1/23/08

¶11. On January 23, Poloff spoke with Sergio Benitez, the Deputy Director of the OAS closely working on the Santa Rosa relocation project in Belize. He stated that last week he received a special request from the GOB to expedite the completion of three of the remaining nine houses to February 4. Rain has flooded the area making it difficult to continue construction, however, he was still hopeful that the entire second phase including the construction of a school would be completed by March 1.

Comment

¶12. The latest GOB request to expedite construction appears to be yet another election tactic designed to sway voters toward the incumbent People's United Party in the upcoming February 7 general elections. The border situation, and Santa Rosa in particular, has been a sore subject for many voters who have leaned toward the opposition party.

Being able to proclaim successful resolution of the Santa Rosa matter would probably satisfy the ruling party's pledge this past November to have the matter resolved "absolutely" by the end of ¶2007.

DIETER